THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Although, no scientific study to assess the quantum of damage and deterioration in quality during post harvest handling of perishable horticultural produce has been conducted, it is estimated that losses vary between 8 to 37 per cent in various crops in different stages as per Report of the Sub-Working Group on Post Harvest Management, Marketing and Exports for the Ninth Plan.

(c) Government have approved a Scheme of Capital Investment Subsidy for Construction/Expansion/ Modernisation of Cold Storages and Storages for implementation during the Ninth Five Year Plan (1999- 2000). The scheme is being implemented by the National Horticulture Board (NHB) which is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Agriculture. Besides, Department of Food Processing Industries is also implementing a scheme for creation of infrastructural facilities of post harvest management and cold chain facilities for food processing including integrated project of cultivation and processing of mushroom, hops, gherkins and baby corn. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce is also giving grants-in-aid for setting up modified/ controlled atmosphere cold storages for facilitation of export and reduce the post harvest losses.

Oil Seed Production

4882. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that oil seed production during 1991—2000 was 21.1 million tons against an average of 23.25 million tons for the previous four years;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this drop in production; and

(c) what steps Government intend to take to increase production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) According to advance estimates for 1999-2000, the oilseed production is likely to be 21.54 million tonnes as against an average of 23.25 million tonnes for the four years viz. 1995-96 to 1998-99. The production of oilseeds during the year 1999-2000 is likely to decline due to aberrant weather conditions.

(c) In order to increase the production and productivi ty of oilseeds, a centrally sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) i:s in operation in 25 States covering 396 selected districts in the country, Unc ler this scheme, financial assistance is being provided for the critical inputs like production and distribution of seeds, distribution of seed minikits, sprinkle r sets, improved farm implements gypsum/ pyrites, micro-nutrients, rhyzobiun 1 culture etc. to the farmers through State Governments. In addition to this, front line and general demonstrations are also organised on the farmers' fields to dissem inate improved production of protection technologies.

Upgradation of Quality and Stock of Cattle

4883. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India own one of the largest livestock population in the world;

(b) the majority of these cattle are reared under sub-optimal conditions due to the low economic status of the owners resulting in a low yield; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Governm ent to upgrade the quality and stock of its cattle?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. As per 1992 Livestock Census the livestock population of the country was 4,70,860 thousand during that year which constituted around 12 per cent of the world livestock population.

(b) The information regarding the conditions under which these cattle are reared, is not collected.

(c) Animal Husbandry & Dairying is a State subject. However, the efforts of the State Governments are supplemented by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India. The Scheme relevant for improving the quality and stock are (i) Extension of Frozen Semen Technology (EFST) and Progeny Testing Programme (PTP), and (ii) National Bull Production Programmed (NBPP). The Government is providing funds to the State Governments to develop infrastructure for breeding operations, conservation of indigenous breed of cattle, bull production and registration, and progeny testing. The Ghoshalas/NGOs/VOs are involved for these activities and